

**Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



Region One
490 North Meridian Rd.
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(406) 752-5501
FAX: 406-257-0349
Ref:DV075.97
July 17, 1996

TO: Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Helena, 59620-1704
Dept. of Health & Environmental Quality, Metcalf Bldg., PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office
Fisheries Division
Regional Supervisor
Legal Unit

Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Lands Section

Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's
Memorial Building, Helena, 59620-1201
Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, 59620-1800
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624
Fish & Wildlife Service T & E, 100 N. Park Ave., Helena, 59601
EPA, Federal Building, Helena, 59601
Army Corps of Engineers, 301 S. Park Ave., Helena, 59601
CSKT, Joe DosSantos, PO Box 278, Pablo, 59855
Donald Kern, Program Director, Montana River Action Network, PO Box 383, 30 N. Last Chance
Gulch, Helena, 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, PO Box 595, Helena, 59620
Flathead County Commissioners, Flathead County Courthouse, Kalispell, 59901
Flathead Conservation District, 30 Lower Valley Rd., Kalispell, 59901

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the proposed construction of a fish ladder from the Flathead River into the Taylor's Outflow pond/creek system, and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until Wednesday, August 7, 1996. Please direct your questions or comments to Fisheries Biologist Ladd Knotek. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dan Vincent
Regional Supervisor

/nb
Enclosure

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 GENERIC CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action Construction of a Fish Ladder
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3. Name of Project Taylor's Outflow Fish Ladder
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)
5. If Applicable:
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date 08/15/96
Estimated Completion Date 09/30/96
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 100%
6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)

Flathead County, T30N, R20W, S16
7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed: residential <u>1</u> acres industrial <u>0</u> acres	(d) Floodplain <u>0</u> acres
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/ Recreation <u>1</u> acres	(e) Productive: irrigated cropland <u>0</u> acres dry cropland <u>0</u> acres forestry <u>0</u> acres rangeland <u>0</u> acres other <u>0</u> acres
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas <u>5</u> acres (Area of Ponds)	
8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

See attached.

9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

The proposed action is to provide fish passage for westslope cutthroat trout from the Flathead River into the Taylor's Outflow pond/creek system. This will open spawning and rearing habitat for Flathead Lake fish. The structure will consist of 8-10 one foot jumps in a series of step-pools.

10. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) **Permits:**

Agency Name Permit Date Filed/#

N/A

(b) **Funding:**

Agency Name Funding Amount

N/A

(c) **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

Agency Name Type of Responsibility

N/A

11. **List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A. Evaluation of the Impacts of the Proposed Action Including Secondary and Cumulative Impacts on the Physical and Human Environment:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		x				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		x				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		x				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			x			1.d.
e. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1.d. Channel will be created to allow shallow gradient from pond to Flathead River. Currently, water passes over a deteriorating dam that required replacement. Vegetation and riprap will be used to limit erosion and bank instability.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		x				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		x				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture or temperature patterns, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		x				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		x				
e. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity or pathogens?			x		Yes	3.a
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		x				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		x				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?			x		Yes	3.d.
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		x				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		x				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		x				
h. Increase in the risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		x				
i. Violation of the Montana Non Degradation Statute?		x				
j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		x				
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		x				
l. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		x				
m. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3.a. Construction of new channel will cause short-term turbidity in waters leaving the structure (3-5 cfs).

3.d. Creation of new channel is purpose of the project. the surface elevation of the pond will be affected less than one foot as a result. Water flowing from the pond to the Flathead River will simply be diverted to a new route with lower gradient.

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			x		Yes	4.a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		x				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species?		x				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		x				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		x				
f. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):
 4.a. Some trees and brush will be removed during construction. Channel banks will be revegetated with native willow sprigs and grasses immediately after construction. Banks will be stabilized with wood "dead-head" structures.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		x				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		x				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		x				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		x				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		x				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		x				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		x				
h. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other: __						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. <u>LAND USE</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: __						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Other: __						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: ____		X				
b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		x				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural or historic values?		x				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		x				
d. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:						
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		x				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		x				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		x				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		x				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		x				
f. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Several options were considered, including:

- 1) No Action: Under present conditions, the outflow acts as a barrier to fish passage. No action would maintain present condition.
- 2) Create a passage structure with no weirs or step pools--much more space would be required and would not be possible at current site.

The present design is the most appropriate in terms of location, aesthetics, and functionality for fish passage.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

None

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? **NO** If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

No EIS required. An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this action because any adverse impacts are short-term, minor, and localized. No major impacts to natural or human environment will result.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

All landowners along the Taylor's Outflow drainage have been contacted and were involved in planning. Public notice of FWP goals for the project have appeared in newspaper. This exceeds the level of public involvement appropriate for a project of this magnitude that occur on private land.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

Comments from private land owners affected with solicited throughout the planning process (about three years).

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Ladd Knotek
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Rd.
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406)751-4542

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this action because impacts are minor, short-term, and localized. All land owners along the Taylor's Outflow drainage have been contacted and were involved in planning. Public notice of FWP goals for the project has appeared in newspaper. Therefore, no EIS is needed.

REF:TAYLOR-FL.EA
July 17, 1996

REV 2/94
EPA.GEN

